

FREE SUGAR

Representative Warburton of Washington, delivered two speeches in the house recently, one on free sugar and one on free wool. In referring to these speeches, Mr. Warburton says:

"I devoted most of my time answering the argument that members of congress can not vote in accordance with their conscience on the wool schedule, or any progressive legislation, because the government can not afford to lose the revenue. It was my purpose to show conclusively that the question of revenue need not be of any special concern in revising the tariff or in enacting any progressive legislation. I think I have made it clearly appear that if we were to restore the tax on tobacco as provided by the law of 1879, we would have all the revenue the government would need on any proposed revision of the tariff. I show that the law of 1879, if in force, would give us a revenue of \$138,000,000 as against \$58,000,000, the amount we now obtain. I also call attention to the fact that the tax provided by the law of 1879 was reduced for the sole reason that we were obtaining too much revenue—more revenue than the government needed. I also call attention to the fact that the tax on beer is as high as the highest point during the civil war, the tax on whisky is about as high as that of the civil war, and our duties on cotton and woolen goods about as high as the civil war, that the tax on tobacco is only about one-fourth of that of the civil war. If we should restore the tax on tobacco as provided by the law of 1879, we would then have a tax on tobacco only equal to one-half of the tax on tobacco in the civil war. I think that our tax on sugar is nothing less than criminal, and I believe that in transferring the tax from sugar to tobacco, one of the greatest reforms in revenue would result. It would take the tax off of a necessity of life and place it on a luxury. I believe that these reforms can be accomplished the coming winter, if all those friendly to them push the matter along."

MR. WARBURTON SENT TO MR. UNDERWOOD THIS LETTER

Washington, D. C., June 17, 1911.—To the Ways and Means Committee, Hon. Oscar Underwood, Chairman, House of Representatives. Gentlemen: I have introduced a bill which places sugar on the "free list" and doubles the tax on all forms of tobacco, trebling it on snuff and graduating it on cigars so that the higher priced cigars have a proportionately higher tax. I am compelled to leave for my home, in Tacoma, to be gone some three or four weeks, and so will have no opportunity in that time to present the matter in person to the committee. When I return I shall press the bill for favorable consideration.

A considerable amount of the data necessary for a proper comprehension of this bill is contained in my speech on "free sugar" and in my more recent speech on the "wool schedule" which I am sending to each member of the committee under separate cover. The rates of duties in the bill are the same on smoking and chewing tobacco as that contained in the law passed March 1, 1879. The rate on snuff is 8c per pound higher than the law of 1879 and 8c per pound lower than the law of 1875. The tax on cheroots and nickel cigars is the same as the law of 1879. The tax on the 10c and two-for-a-quarter cigar is \$2.00 a thousand and 2-10 of a cent higher a cigar than the law of 1879. On the 15c cigar it is \$6.00 a thousand or 6-10 of a cent higher on each cigar than the law of 1879. All cigars above this amounted to \$10.00 a thousand or one cent a cigar higher than the law of 1879.

I want to call your attention to the fact that the law of 1879 was about half and not quite half of the internal revenue tax at the close of the civil war, and that the tax on other luxuries such as beer is as high as the highest during the civil war, the tax on whisky about as high as that of the civil war, and the duties on cotton and woolen goods about as high as that of the civil war.

In the table on the last page of my speech on "Wool," I show, by figures given me by an expert in the internal revenue office, the amount of tax we would have received for the fiscal year of 1910 had the law of 1879 been in force. The amount would have been \$138,050,930 as against \$58,113,457 the amount actually received. So it is easy to see that the revenues in the proposed bill would have been far in excess of \$80,000,000, or probably over \$92,-

000,000. I am informed by the revenue department that they have no records of the amount of 5c, 10c and 15c cigars, etc., consumed so the excess amount can not be determined accurately.

If the bill becomes a law, we would lose about \$53,000,000 in the revenue on sugar, so the net gain under the proposed law would be about \$40,000,000 and, as I say in my speech on "Free Sugar," when we remove the tariff on sugar, we will not only save the people of this country the revenue tax on sugar of \$53,000,000, but in addition thereto, \$86,000,000 that is now exacted of our people most of which goes to the sugar trust and to our island planters. Is this sum not worth saving? Will any one object to taking this tax off of sugar and placing it on tobacco, when we can save this enormous sum? No one need use tobacco—every one must use sugar.

I can not refrain from quoting from former Attorney General Wayne MacVeagh, in a letter to President Taft, published in the "North American Review" for February, 1911, in which he says, in part:

"I stated that to my mind, it was not too harsh a word to call the existing tax on sugar infamous, as it extorted as large an actual sum from every working man barely able to support himself and family as it extorted from the richest multimillionaire in the land; and I ventured to express the hope which I need not say was promptly disappointed, that in any revision of the tariff, sugar, at least, would be placed upon the free list. . . . but no report from any board, even of angels, could prove that it is either just or wise for you to continue two years longer to require every grocery in the United States to rob the sweated seamstress and the unskilled workman of the two artificial prices for the sugar that they must buy if they are to live. As you know, one such artificial price goes to the treasury by the tariff—the other as equally well known goes to the sugar trust."

I would be glad to have you report this bill favorably in my absence, but in case you do not, I earnestly ask you not to report adversely until my return when I may be given an opportunity for a hearing. Yours sincerely,

S. WARBURTON.

NEW YORK FOR THE INCOME TAX

The New York assembly approved the income tax, thus bringing New York state into line among those states that have ratified the proposed federal constitutional amendment. New York is therefore the thirty-first state to take this desirable course.

Governor Dix is entitled to the hearty congratulations of democrats for the strong effort he put forth in behalf of this reform.

Thirty-five states, or three-fourths are necessary for the success of the proposed amendment. Those states which have indorsed the amendment are Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

The fifteen states which have failed to indorse the amendment either through adverse action or by inactive adjournment are Connecticut (whose house killed the proposal following the lead of the senate), Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Utah, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

COLORADO IN LINE

Denver, Colo., July 7, 1911.—Editor The Commoner: A recent issue of The Commoner contained a statement from Senator Bourne of Oregon, giving the list of those states having the initiative and referendum. The list was interesting, and we are all obliged to The Commoner for printing this list, but Senator Bourne left Colorado off the list and Colorado does not want to be left off the list.

The list of states which have adopted this great reform is a roll of honor and Colorado's name must be added to that roll. The initiative and referendum was submitted by a special session of the legislature called by our sturdy and courageous governor, John F. Shafroth, for that particular purpose, and was adopted by a majority vote in every county in the state in the November election of 1910. Please add Colorado to the roll of honor. Very truly,

WAYNE C. WILLIAMS.

MR. LA FOLLETTE AND MR. TAFT

The Saturday Evening Post prints an interesting interview with Senator Robert M. La Follette. In that interview Senator La Follette said: "No, Taft is not progressive. Taft is reactionary. After his election Mr. Taft began to throw over his friends—the friends of Roosevelt. Now, desiring re-election, Mr. Taft seems—I say seems—to be throwing over a few of his reactionary friends. In other words, he is turning against those new friends for whom he turned against his old friends."

The interviewer asked Senator La Follette this question: "Senator, I remember your speech of introduction when Mr. Taft visited Madison in the campaign of 1908. I can hear your words as they rang out in the university gymnasium: 'Taft is progressive.' Immediately the correspondents telegraphed their paper: 'Put Wisconsin in the republican column—and keep it there.' Now, senator, has Mr. Taft proved himself progressive?"

Senator La Follette replied: "In the campaign I really believed that Taft was progressive. That President Roosevelt so believed, no one can doubt. Otherwise he would not have chosen him to carry forward the progressive policies that had so signalized the Roosevelt administration. Mr. Taft failed from the outset though for a long time I hoped against hope, 'suspended judgment' and held up his hands in every way I could."

There is a plain moral in this for democrats. It is not to take anybody's word as to the character and disposition of the man who aspires to the democratic nomination for the presidency. Ask the candidate himself and require a candid answer before you trust him with your vote.

THE NEW LORIMER COMMITTEE

Here is a description of the new Lorimer committee:

Members of former committee that reported on Lorimer investigation who are members of the present committee on privileges and elections—Senators Dillingham, Gamble, Heyburn, Bailey, Paynter, Johnson, Fletcher—7.

Members of present committee who served on sub-committee of Lorimer investigation—Senators Gamble, Heyburn, Paynter, Johnston, Frazier—5.

Members of present committee who, as senators, voted that Lorimer was duly elected—Senators Dillingham, Gamble, Heyburn, Bradley, Oliver, Bailey, Paynter, Johnston, Fletcher—9.

Total number of senators on present committee—15.

Members of present committee who as senators voted that Lorimer was not duly elected—Senators Clapp, Sutherland, Jones—3.

Members of present committee who were not members of the senate when Lorimer case was considered and decided, third session, Sixty-first congress—Senators Kenyon, Kern, Lea—3.

KEEPING PARTY PLEDGES

Senator Stockwell, of Ohio, introduced during the last session a bill, the purpose of which was to provide a method by which candidates for the legislature might declare their attitude toward the principles embodied in the platforms of political parties. It carried out the idea of the Oregon plan on the election of senators. That is, it provided a method by which candidates could indorse modify or repudiate platform pledges before the election and thus put themselves in a position where they could be held responsible by their constituents. It is a good bill. A platform ought to be binding, and any legislation is good which compels the candidate to meet the issues before the country and to deal with them specifically.

"HANGING TOGETHER"

The National Wool Growers' association has a motto upon its letterhead, "We must hang together or we will hang separately." There is no doubt that they have been hanging together; they have been willing to join with the manufacturers to tax the American people as much as the traffic would bear. Would it not be a good plan for the consumers of woolen goods to hang together a little and thus secure relief from the burden that they have borne separately?

FOLK OF MISSOURI

J. W. Dunlop, Dublin, Texas—I am sure that all consistent democrats will indorse your recent fight for free wool. Why don't you make an effort to line the boys up for Folk for president. He is the logical man, if you are out of the race.